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TO   :   DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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ANALYSIS
BRANCH

FROM   :   Amembassy CAIRO   DATE: November 15, 1962

SUBJECT :   Memorandum of conversation with Gamal Abdel Nasser,
President of the United Arab Republic   15 -41

REF   :

COPY NO. ———— SERIES B

PARTICIPANTS: Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of the United Arab Republic
Senator Mike Mansfield
Senator Richard Russell
Senator Claiborne Pell
Senator Benjamin A. Smith
Senator J. Caleb Boggs
Mr. Fran_ Valeo, Staff Assistant
Ambassador John S. Badeau

At half past twelve on November 14, Senators Mansfield, Russell,
Pell, Smith, and Boggs, and Staff Assistant Valeo, accompanied by
Ambassador Badeau, were received by President Nasser at his personal
residence at Heliopolis. Contrary to usual custom, the Presidency
confirmed the appointment and set the date before the arrival of the
participants in the United Arab Republic.

As usual, President Nasser was relaxed, vocal, and friendly. The
conversation lasted for approximately one hour, at the close of which
press and television photographers were admitted to take publicity
pictures. The interview terminated at the Ambassador's suggestion,
since it is not President Nasser's custom to terminate an interview.

Senator Mansfield was the chief spokesman of the group, but other
Senators participated. The following topics were covered:

Yemen: Inquiry was made as to the current situation in Yemen
and the UAR attitude toward it. President Nasser replied with a
brief summation of the factors producing the revolution and then
outlined the UAR attitude toward the Sallal Government. He stated that

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the UAR had no ambitions in Yemen beyond the establishment of the
revolutionary regime which, he said, was the first change in government
Yemen had had in 1,200 years. While recognizing the difficulties the
new regime faced, it was at least publicly committed to progress and
democracy and as such the UAR could not allow it to go under. He spoke
in some detail of the various areas of conflict, specifically battles
in which UAR troops had been engaged, and admitted the difficulty of
the terrain. He did not raise the question of United States recognition,
nor did he attack the Saudi Arabian Government, although he strongly
emphasized the support in money, arms, and personnel that the Saudis
were furnishing the anti-Sallal forces.

Cuba: The President was asked how he interpreted the recent American
moves for the abandonment of recent offensive bases in Cuba. In reply
he stated that the UAR had been disturbed over Castro's policies during
the past year. Castro was not a true neutral but had allowed himself
to be maneuvered into the position of at least a partial Soviet depen-
dency. He had warned the Cuban Ambassador that Russia would not fight
a World War to protect Cuba, and this judgement was amply borne out by
events. Attempts to equate the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Egypt
with the Cuban situation were misdirected; at the time of the invasion
Egypt spoke for herself, whereas in the Cuban affair, it was Moscow that
decided Cuban fate. From this the President passed on to general obser-
vations about non-alignment, stating that there had been pressures in
Egypt seeking to conclude a "special arrangement" with the USSR, but
Nasser had turned this down because it would mean the loss of Egyptian
independence. It was Castro's failure to follow the same policy that
brought him to his present difficulties.

In general, the UAR did not like any foreign bases and believed
that some practical plan for their abolition would ease world tension.

UAR development: In answer to a question concerning the progress
of the ten year development plan in the UAR, the President briefly
outlined the general features of the plan. He spoke quite realistically
about the difficulties that were being encountered, but stated that
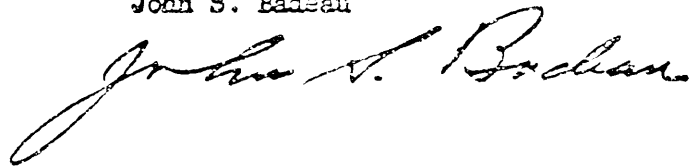it was still his hope to double the national income within the next
ten years.

Israel: In response to a question as to what ultimate solution could be foreseen for the Israeli problem, "not this year or next year, but perhaps twenty years hence", the President replied that the heart of the problem lay in the refugee situation. Until the Arab refugees are permitted freely to return to Israel, there to become law-abiding citizens with the same rights as Israelis, he thought there could be no solution. In effect this was proposing that Israel would become a binational state, giving up its current intention of building a nation on the basis of a religious commitment. While he admitted that this ran counter to the raison d'etre of Israel, the President stated that no other solution was possible.

To a further question as to what would happen if the refugees could not return, the President said that he was afraid of pressures building up that would ultimately lead to some kind of armed clash. In support of this he cited the Crusades, where a Christian kingdom existed for seventy years but finally disappeared because its very existence unified the Arab world about it. At no time did the President suggest that the UAR contemplates military action against Israel; rather, he painted the picture of the inevitable frustration and irritation growing to the point where violence would break out. In passing he said that the trouble with the Johnson Plan was that it proposed to admit 'only ten thousand refugees to Israel", and this would never be acceptable either to the refugees or to the Arab countries.

With this discussion, the conference closed.

John S. Badeau